

LOUISIANA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 8, 2008

Department of Social Services Update

DSS Releases Most Disaster Food Stamp Application Sites, Income Limits

BATON ROUGE - The Department of Social Services today announced the list of Disaster Food Stamp application sites where residents in 31 eligible parishes can go to apply for the emergency help.

The parishes declared eligible for Disaster Food Stamps are: Acadia, Allen, Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, West Baton Rouge and West Feliciana.

The Bossier, Caddo and Ouachita Office of Family Support locations are able to assist dislocated citizens from the above parishes.

[Click here](#) for a partial list of confirmed locations as of noon Monday, September 8th, which will open Tuesday morning at 8 a.m. With widespread power outages and preparation for Ike, these locations are subject to change so applicants are advised to call 1-888-524-3578 and hit option 3 or visit <http://www.dss.state.la.us/> before going to a site. The complete list will be released as soon as it is available.

Although the application is very streamlined there are areas where applicants might have to stand in line for awhile. Those locations will have tents, fans and water in an attempt to keep applicants as comfortable as possible. In order to prevent people from standing in line unnecessarily, [click here](#) for a chart which will help residents determine whether they meet the income eligibility threshold.

The Department of Social Services will determine a households' eligibility and benefits according to the current DFSP guidelines. These policies include the following criteria:

- Only individuals who live in the affected parish at the time of the disaster and who experienced damage to their property or incurred other disaster-related expense or loss of income.
- Income limits will apply and will include a standard deduction amount for disaster-related expenses.
- New households will be certified for one month and will receive the maximum allotment for the household size.
- The state will make sure there is no duplication among households before benefits are authorized.
- Applicants will be required to show proof of identification and residency prior to certification.
- Household composition that existed on August 29, 2008 will be used in determining the allotment.
- The consequences of fraud will be prominently posted and explained to applicants.

Residents will not have to list disaster-related expenses but income levels and liquid resources will be taken into account to determine eligibility. In order to reduce fraud and inaccuracies, a standard disaster expense deduction will be subtracted from that total. Benefit amounts for eligible families are below:

The Department of Social Services will begin taking applications on Tuesday, September 9th from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the application process will last seven consecutive days. Once the application has been made, it will take no more than three days for benefits to be approved.

Through this program, citizens will also be able to buy hot food as well as groceries due to the large volume of residents without operating kitchens or who are displaced from their homes and living in a hotel, motel or shelter.

Participants in the regular Food Stamp Program do not need to apply; their benefits will automatically be lifted to the maximum amount allowable for September and their August benefits have been increased by 20% in order to replace lost food. The Department of Social Services will release an updated list of locations at 4 p.m.

For the latest information on Hurricane Gustav, you can visit emergency.louisiana.gov or call the state's emergency hotline at 1-866-288-2484 to listen to a recorded message with the most up-to-date information.